waterfront look very weak. The Communist bogey has been used so much it has become a joke. The Government maintains that the present trouble is all part of a Communist Plan.

STRONG PROTESTS

The charge that the watersiders were Communists or Communist dupes brought strong protest from the waterside returned servicemen comprising 75% of the membership of the old union, from the 1914-18 and 1939-45 wars. It is rather ironical that those individuals who supposedly went away to the last war to destroy the Nazi monster, were now confronted with another monster with similar earmarks, as soon as they demand a little more of the wealth they produced, in order to maintain their already miserable living standard. They were supposed to have fought for the new order all right, but it is worse than the old one. However, this has been a substantiation of the position maintained by socialists in both wars, that the common enemy of the workers every where is Capitalism. Workers must extend the hand of friendship to workers everywhere, and organize for the common object of abolishing Capitalism, the cause of modern wars.

The activities of the Parliamentary Labor Party throughout the struggle have been interesting. Accused at the start of sitting on the fence, and they were, for good reasons, the L.P. politicians have exercised their usual subtlety. When the trouble first broke out, they had no complaint at the use of the emergency regulations or the anti-trade union legislation their party brought down when it was the Government. The comments of the leader of the Opposition, Mr. W. Nash, to a meeting in Hamilton when answering people that had been "asking why the New Zealand Labor Party had done nothing" are illuminating. Mr. Nash said, "He was in favor of applying the regulations in an easy and not in a rigorous way as long as this did not tend to prolong the strike." Asked what the Labor Party would have done under the same circumstances, Mr. Nash said, "It would have had no hesitation in using its power to ensure that esential supplies were delivered to hospitals and homes."

He considered that there were certain respects in which the regulations could be relaxed. He did not like to see freedom of speech curtailed or the right given to officials to open private correspondence. Another thing he could not agree with was the clause which made it an offense to give food to assist a watersider's wife and children. (Evening Post, Wellington, 5-30-51).

"NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST"

The L. P. Politicians have declared themselves "neither for nor against" the locked out and striking unions. With the strong stand determination shown by the Unions to continue the fight, the L. P. took the right time to get in to reap the spoils of the workers' fight. In the House of Representatives (June, '51), the Import Supply Bill was debated. The L. P. politicians took the opportunity to debate the industrial situation generally. They expressed their concern at the state of the country and the essentiality of a settlement to the current industrial strife and the chaos it was causing. With an eye to the future they put a good case for themselves. The Government speaker in reply quoted from a pamphlet issued by the Honorable A. McLagan when he was minister of Labor in the Labor Government entitled, "Statement concerning recent disputes affecting waterfront work." Therein the cause of the waterfront disputes are attributed to the attitude of "Barnes and Hill" on the various Waterfront Commissions and Authorities and the machinations of the "Communists." It is easily seen why the Labor politicians could not come out on the side of the waterside workers even if they wanted to. The recent events have given the Labor

Party the only good weapon on which to fight the next election. They will be able to adopt the attitude of "We told you so." The attitude and actions of the National Government will be stressed as the cause of the problems facing the workers. There had been, by the way, no mention by L. P. representatives here of the Labor Government in Great Britain and their attitude to trade unionists who have defied it. The Federation of Labor has played a splendid part in the struggle, giving the National Government every aid to crush the watersiders, and their allies in the fight. Even the Labor Party has had to snub them. The action of the F. of L. has demonstrated the uselessness of compulsory unionism to trade unionists. When the National Government brought down its Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration amendment Bill there was in it a threat to compulsory unionism. The officials of the F. of L. immediately dashed to its rescue, and convinced Mr. Holland of its value and pointed out that "The Federation has yet to find any section of the employers who object to its continuance." (Southern Cross, Nov. 3, 1950).

COMPULSORY UNIONISM THEIR MAINSTAY

Without compulsory unionism the officials would lose their mainstay, and incidentally the power they at present wield. They certainly have proved in this dispute its value to any Government. In the F. of L. setup one man can command as many as thirty-four votes of small unions. It is easily seen that a few individuals can determine the policy of the F. of L. Lack of knowledge and apathy of the membership of the unions is of great assistance to these F. of L. leaders, as it is with all "leaders". The promise of support from the Railwaymen did not take a substantial form, apart from subscriptions to the strike funds. The instruction "not to handle any material on the waterfront normally handled by the watersiders" seems to have been lost in transit.

The story of the whole struggle is one of all long trade union struggles. The Government precipitated it at a bad time for the master class of N. Z. It was in the height of the exporting season, thereby costing them an immense sum. The bright feature has been the determined stand taken by the rank and file of the unions involved, something it seems that the Government and its advisers left out of its calculations. Another good feature is the part played by the young members who entered into the work of organizing the various strike committees, many of them having had no previous experience in the work. Should these young people show the same energy and enthusiasm in acquiring understanding of their working class position in Society, there would soon be a strong Socialist Party in N. Z. The wives of the workers involved in the struggle have played no small part, many of them going out to work to support the home. This has enabled some men to hold out as long as they have.

After nearly 22 weeks there are indications that there will be a return to work shortly. What the terms of settlement will be is anyone's guess. It was pointed out, in a letter sent to you, January 18th, 1951, that the National Government could expect quite a lot of bother in 1951. Well, they have got it, with every indication that there is more to come. The whole struggle has been another demonstration of the insecurity and general rottenness of the wages system. Conditions bitterly fought for and won over the years can be wiped out in, comparatively speaking, just a few minutes.

However, if the workers involved were to display the same enthusiasm and determination in examining the socialist case as they have in this dispute, they would quickly discover that the abolition of the wage system is the only solution to the problems that confront them, that is, lockouts, strikes, poverty, atomic wars.

RON EVERSON
Overseas Secretary, S.P.N.Z.